

## **Governor's Steering Committee on Natural Resource-based Industries**

### ***Priority Actions***

#### **Preserve the Resource Base!**

Increasing land valuations are driving fishermen away from waterfronts, forcing farmers to sell off their land for development, and destroying traditional recreational places. If Maine agricultural, fishing, forestry, and tourism businesses are to thrive, they must have access to these resources.

*The Steering Committee's goal is to create a comprehensive action plan to address the pressures that rising land valuations are placing on fishing, farming, and forestry landowners. A "tool kit" of tax, fiscal, and regulatory incentives will be developed that enables flexible, effective approaches to the varied issues across these sectors. As part of this effort, a tax proposal regarding farmland, forests, and working waterfronts will be recommended for consideration in the next legislative session, in January 2005.*

**Lead Agency:** Department of Conservation with Departments of Agriculture, Economic and Community Development, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Marine Resources, Transportation, and State Planning Office

#### **Drive Demand and Capacity for Local Food!**

Maine households offer a huge potential market for Maine-produced, food products, fish, and seafood. For agricultural goods and services *alone*, increasing local purchases from 4% to 10% annually would generate \$180 million in product sales for Maine farmers.

*The Steering Committee's goal is to create and strengthen links between Maine agricultural entities and fisheries, and Maine consumers. Strong marketing channels will be developed that improve consumer awareness and enable Maine restaurants, inns, institutions, and college campuses to feature Maine food products. Technical assistance, research,*

*and extension services will be strengthened to increase consumer demand and the capacity of farmers and fishers to meet that demand.*

**Lead Agency:** Department of Agriculture and Marine Resources

#### **Build Capacity of Hospitality and Recreation Business Entrepreneurs!**

Commercial tourism is not one industry, but rather a diverse mix of goods and services. They range from motels and sporting camps to whale watching tours and Maine guides, to gas stations and variety stores. Entrepreneurship and management capability is limited, posing barriers to creating quality jobs and growing tourism-related businesses.

*The Steering Committee's goal is the development of a comprehensive, coordinated higher education program for hospitality, tourism, and recreation. By fall, a plan will be developed for ways that industry can collaborate with the University of Maine System and Maine Community College System to deliver degree programs, research, and extension services.*

**Lead Agency:** Department of Economic and Community Development and State Planning Office with University of Maine System and Maine Community College System

#### **Market Maine!**

Maine's image –inseparably linked with its natural resources and its sense of place –is a potent tool for marketing. Whether it is green lumber, farm fresh food products, or hiking Downeast, Maine's clean, green, worry-free appeal is universal. At the same time, small producers and businesses could benefit from a coordinated marketing scheme. Increased collaboration may be able to boost Maine's presence in the marketplace.

*The Steering Committee's goal is to explore market issues, including branding, marketing, marketing structure, and cooperation between marketing organizations and develop approaches to strengthen links between marketing organizations, enhance distribution systems (coops), and create a common message.*

**Lead Agency:** Department of Economic and Community Development with Departments of Agriculture, Conservation, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Marine Resources, and Transportation

### **Enhance Competitiveness!**

According to Dr Charles Colgan, the biggest

challenge to growing our natural resource-based industries is to control costs. Maine industries compare disadvantageously with their competitors in taxes, health care costs, workers' compensation costs, and efficient transportation of goods. To create "world class" business services, we must address these issues that affect our ability to compete.

*The Steering Committee's goal is to identify those costs influenced by government, compare Maine's costs to other places where we compete, and identify ways to address taxation inequities and costs of health care, workers' compensation, energy, and transportation.*

**Lead Agency:** State Planning Office with Departments of Agriculture, Conservation, Economic and Community Development, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Marine Resources, and Transportation